



Federal Bureau of
Investigation



Bureau of Indian Affairs



Coconino County Sheriff's
Office



U.S. Attorney's Office
District of Arizona

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 8, 2006

For Information Contact Public Affairs
WYN HORNBuckle
Telephone: (602) 514-7625
Cell: (602) 525-2681

HAVASUPAI MAN INDICTED FOR MURDER, ROBBERY AND KIDNAPING OF JAPANESE TOURIST TOMOMI HANAMURE

FLAGSTAFF – Federal officials joined the Coconino County Sheriff's Office to announce Friday the indictment of Randy Wescogame, 18, of the Havasupai Indian Tribe, on federal charges for the murder, robbery and kidnaping of Tomomi Hanamure, a Japanese tourist who disappeared on May 8, 2006 after going for a hike to the Havasupai Falls.

"The charges today are the result of the close cooperation and intense commitment by the Coconino County Sheriff's Office, the FBI, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the Havasupai Community to solve this case," said Paul K. Charlton, U.S. Attorney for the District of Arizona. "The facts underlying the indictment reflect the last moments of a young lady who came from Japan to enjoy the beauty of this country, and who, instead, met a senseless and tragic end to her life. Our thoughts remain with Ms. Hanamure's family during this difficult time."

Wescogame made an initial appearance before U.S. Magistrate Mark Aspey in Flagstaff Friday morning. Wescogame has been in tribal custody on unrelated assault charges since May 2006. He was transferred to federal custody Friday morning.

"The murder of Tomomi Hanamure was a tragic event that affected many people in two countries," stated Coconino County Sheriff Bill Pribil. "The arrest of Randy Wescogame is the result of the dedication, hard work and combined efforts of investigators from numerous local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies."

The five-count indictment by a federal grand jury in Phoenix alleges that Wescogame willfully murdered Hanamure in the course of kidnaping and robbing her on May 8, 2006. The charges are Premeditated First Degree Murder, First Degree Felony Murder-Robbery, Robbery, First Degree Felony Murder Kidnaping, and Kidnaping.

Hanamure, 34, was reported missing on May 9, 2006, a day after she checked into a lodge on the Havasupai Indian Reservation and left for a hike to the Havasupai Falls. The Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Coconino County Sheriff's Office initiated a search and rescue operation. Her body was located on May 13 in a secluded section of the river. An autopsy revealed that Hanamure died as a result of approximately 29 stab wounds.

-MORE-

FBI Phoenix Division Special Agent in Charge John E. Lewis stated, "Crimes such as this murder that are committed in isolated areas are difficult to solve. Despite leads and investigative efforts it often takes time to secure enough information and evidence to move forward to an indictment and we, the FBI along with our partners, the Coconino County Sheriff's Office, the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Department of Public Safety, are pleased with the progression of this investigation." Special Agent in Charge Lewis also stressed that the senseless murder of Ms. Hanamure, a guest in our country, may have never been solved without the continued assistance of the Coconino County Sheriff's Office and therefore extends his appreciation to that agency.

Selanhongva McDonald, Special Agent in Charge for the Bureau of Indian Affairs Office of Justice Services, stated: "The Bureau of Indian Affairs worked alongside the other federal, tribal, state, and local agencies aiding them in this difficult case. By working closely together we've demonstrated the determination and perseverance of the agencies and investigators involved to bring justice."

A detention hearing is set for Tuesday, December 12 in Flagstaff.

A conviction for any one of the charges of first degree murder, first degree felony murder-robbery, first degree felony murder-kidnaping, or kidnaping, would carry a maximum penalty of life in prison, a \$250,000 fine or both. A conviction for robbery carries maximum penalty of 15 years in prison, a \$250,000 fine or both. In determining an actual sentence, the judge will consult the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

An indictment is simply the method by which a person is charged with criminal activity and raises no inference of guilt. An individual is presumed innocent until competent evidence is presented to a jury that establishes guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

The investigation preceding the indictment was conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Coconino County Sheriff's Office, with assistance from the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Arizona Department of Public Safety. The prosecution is being handled by Vincent Q. Kirby, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix, and Camille Bibles, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Flagstaff.

CASE NUMBER: CR-06-1077-PCT
RELEASE NUMBER: 2006-261(Wescagome)

###